Editorial

*A*cts of inquiry (Brizuela, Stewart, Carrillo, & Berger, 2000) permeate our lives. We seek information, ask questions, listen, observe, touch, and reflect on these processes to make meaning of our worlds. This is what it means to be human. From a very early age, young children are inquirers as they explore their physical, social, cognitive, and emotional worlds to understand, learn, and grow. They do this naturally with curiosity, energy, enthusiasm, engagement, and determination. They are unstoppable in their quest for new understandings and knowledge about their increasingly complex lives. It is not surprising, therefore, that theorists have been examining over centuries this natural human propensity to inquire and the implications it has for teaching and learning.

Constructivists, such as Piaget and Vygotsky, have shown that meaning making is social, and dependent on what understandings and perspectives one brings to a situation and the context in which it takes place. As a result, multiple interpretations are not only possible, but also probable, and desirable. Pragmatists such as Dewey and Bruner have illustrated the importance of understanding and learning by *doing*. As ideas about inquiry have become more nuanced, advocates have included the need for reflection (Schön, 1983) to understand not only *what* one knows, but also *how*, and the need for reflexivity (Brookfield, 1995) to illuminate how one's belief system or identity influences meaning making and that of others. It has become apparent how important it is to encourage and legitimize multiple ways of doing and knowing not only to develop particular talents and propensities for meaning making (Gardner, 2000), but also to make space for different ways of understanding (Eisner, 1991). In addition, there is a need to develop a critical perspective (Freire, 1970) to ensure that inquiry is a "stance" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) that is consistently meaningful, equitable, and ethical. Learners use their talents and interests in inquiry, and those responsible for it work alongside with the learners in a relational, inclusive, and encouraging environment, scaffolding the work as needed. Increasingly, these basic tenets of inquiry have had substantial impact on curricula and pedagogy in schools and higher education, as well as on research, and professional development.

In the 1930s, the idea of inquiry learning most frequently permeated the science curriculum. It was a way to help students learn to emulate scientists in their quest for new understandings of the physical world. It did not remain in the science domain, however. Educators such as Hilda Taba, Louise Rosenblatt, and others, pushed these ideas into the arenas of literature (reader response) and social studies (project learning), and beyond. Later in the 1970s and 1980s, sociolinguists such as Shirley Brice Heath helped educators to see the need for inquiry to be an integral part of all pedagogy.

In the last 30 years, inquiry has taken a prominent place in research circles as qualitative inquiry has burgeoned to include narrative and artful forms of exploring and portraying the work. These forms of inquiry not only provide new, relational, and different lenses for understanding, but also make research more accessible and help to promote important social justice agendas.

Professional development in education, too, has been touched by inquiry. Action research and teacher/practitioner inquiry are examples of how educators can explore their practices to develop professionally, legitimize what they do, and get their voices heard. Increasingly, many forms of professional development take place in professional learning communities, or communities of practice which are networks of educators who, using the tenets of inquiry outlined above, explore collaboratively and over time, issues that are germane to them and their practice. As the community develops through shared work, so does the level of trust and the participants are able to take on roles as "critical friends" to each other to push the learning deeper and further. The collaborative work reduces the isolation so often present in the lives of educators, and helps to build capacity within the circles in which they work.

Unfortunately, reductionist ideas about inquiry tend to push back against the tenets of inquiry because they include demands for and advocates of prescriptive agendas and frameworks, as well as recipes for teaching and learning. These notions eliminate curiosity, engagement, discovery, and interpretation, as well as the relational, meaningful, and inclusive aspects of inquiry. The standards and accountability/evidenced-based movements of the last two decades also push back at inquiry because they promote conformity over possibility and competition over collaboration. It is with these tensions in mind that I hope you will enjoy the wonderful array of articles in this issue that represent a multifaceted look at inquiry in schools, higher education, research, and professional development.

Invited commentaries

We are very fortunate to have a number of eminent people who have provided commentaries for this issue. Cochran-Smith and Lytle, both professors of education at Boston University and the University of Pennsylvania respectively, and long-time innovators in practitioner inquiry, develop the notion of "inquiry as stance" or world view, and address the gap between university discourse and the reality of the daily life in schools. Cole and Knowles, also professors of education at Mount Saint Vincent University and OISE/University Toronto, and the authors who coined the term "arts-informed" research, discuss how the new era of accountability should challenge researchers to use the arts to make spaces for questions, engagement, reflection, and conversation, rather than delivering answers to the public and funding agencies. Gallas, a veteran elementary teacher and a current educational consultant, eloquently shows us the naturalness of inquiry that she documented while watching her young grandson in his everyday interaction with toys and objects around him, and how her decision to write reflectively each day after teaching school ultimately paved the way for her teacher research in her classroom. Alexandra Hillcoat, a grade six student in a Montreal school, elaborates in a videotaped interview how through a guided form of classroom inquiry she delved into the life of artist Marie Laurencin and what she learned about the artist and the process as a result. I was privileged to have seen her present her project at McGill to an audience of undergraduate students. I was very impressed with what she learned as a result of her inquiry and how easily and capably she was able to use technology in her investigation. Hollingsworth, a visiting professor at Berkeley and emeritus professor at San José State University, in an audiotaped interview defines inquiry as a collaborative conversation. She shares her 20-year experience of working collaboratively on an open-ended inquiry with a group of her undergraduate students after they indicated to her that they did not learn anything from the literacy class she taught. She discusses the challenges that emerged among the group, as well as those they faced getting published, and the profound insights they gained about inquiry in this longitudinal process. The commentaries end with an audiotaped interview with Jane Yolen, a well-known and prize-winning author of children's books. She describes her process of writing as inquiry focusing on her wonderful story of "Owl Moon."

The articles by the contributors to this issue are presented in alphabetical order by author. Here I discuss their work in a thematic way.

Landscapes of inquiry

Using specific classroom examples as well as what theorists in the field have to say about inquiry, Cordeiro, a professor at Rhode Island College, helps to lay out a

landscape for classroom inquiry emphasizing the important role of puzzlement in personal and real-world dilemmas. Chichekian, Savard, and Shore, a graduate student, assistant professor, and professor emeritus at McGill University, add to the inquiry landscape more locally by tracing its roots in both English- and French-language work. They develop a useful lexicon of inquiry terms to help bridge the two communities particularly in the Quebec context where the curriculum is predicated on constructivist notions of inquiry.

Artful inquiry

Elza, a recent PhD graduate from Simon Fraser University, discusses how her natural propensity to write poetry and her study of philosophy, once very separate, became intertwined and complementary, and how the role of the critic/reviewer can have a transformative, or a devastating impact, when taking the risk to write poetry. Dobson, a PhD student at McGill University, uses the work of Anne Sullivan, a well-known poet and arts-based researcher, who suggests that one needs to "find an occasion" for poetry. Dobson not only finds this poetic occasion, but also makes a pivotal connection between finding poems and educating youth. Prosser and Burke, working out of Leeds University and the University of Cambridge, kindly permitted a reprint of their chapter on image-based research from the "Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples and Issues," edited by Cole and Knowles in 2008. They discuss how central to and empowering images are in the visual culture of children and demonstrate a variety of ways that visual approaches can engage children and tap into their worlds. Patterson, an associate scholar at OISE/University of Toronto, describes the power of collaboration and performative inquiry in her work with a collective of colleagues who explored ways to artfully portray avenues to trouble notions about and provide spaces for difference in ability, race, gender, and ethnicity. Starko, a professor at Eastern Michigan University, uses autobiographical inquiry to examine how her experience in pursuing an art course on mosaics became a metaphor for how to implement inquiry in any classroom. And last, but not least, Cardinal, a PhD student at the University of Alberta, shares the process of conducting an autobiographical narrative study of her own aboriginal experience and that of her relatives that helped her to understand the power of narrative inquiry and to reconnect with her roots from which she had strayed. All of these contributions attest to the power and potential of artful inquiry.

Inquiry in teacher preparation

Schaefer, a graduate student, and Clandinin, a professor, both at the University of Alberta, show how a fictional "sanding" of beginning teachers' experiences

which they created by reducing excerpts from interview field texts to templates and numbers, produces a very different understanding of what is going on in the lives of novice teachers than what is revealed through narrative inquiry. Because narrative inquiry attends to the complexities and multidimensionality of their lives as teachers, it offers deeper insights into their needs and challenges they face and suggests how this might shape and improve teacher preparation. Elliott-Johns, an assistant professor at Nipissing University, describes how she has encouraged her undergraduate teacher education students to make use of digital and other multi-modal responses to literature in her literacy classes. This work not only helped students to bridge print and digital literacies, but it also engaged them in a form of inquiry that would be helpful to them in their future classrooms. Hyperlinks to their projects are included in the article. Delcourt, a professor at Western Connecticut University, and McKinnon, a principal of Branchville Elementary School in Ridgefield, Connecticut, discuss how inquiry is not stressed enough in teacher preparation programs and argue for an increased emphasis on questioning because of its importance in inquiry. They offer some tools for monitoring questioning in the classroom and developing questions to scaffold higher order thinking.

Practitioner/teacher inquiry

Couture, a teacher at Heritage High School in the suburbs of Montreal, McBride, who is a research coordinator there, Saha, who is a vice-principal at another high school in the same school board, Schellhase, who teaches Canadian history at Heritage, and Von Eschen, who teaches senior mathematics there, have developed a Centre for Inquiry into Professional Practice (CIPP). In this article they discuss the principles that undergird their inquiry context and provide snapshots of how this inquiry plays out in their work. Hughes-McDonnell, an associate professor at Emmanuel College in Boston and Burgess, a professor at River College in Nashua, New Hampshire, describe how science teachers are often pulled between promoting inquiry and "covering" content. In order to help teachers see that they can do both, they have involved a group of teachers in a multi-year program that helps them to explore science inquiry themselves and then to create authentic and sustained inquiry opportunities among their students. Shagoury, the Mary Stuart Rogers Chair of Education at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, has been involved in teacher inquiry for many years. She discusses how by using "crystallization" (the use of different lenses to understand what is being studied), a term adopted from the work of Laurel Richardson, she encourages the teachers with whom she works to use narrative, art, reflection, metaphors, and imagination in their inquiry processes.

Professional inquiry in learning communities/communities of practice

Brown, the coordinator for the MA program for school leaders at the University of Northern British Columbia, and Cherkowski, an assistant professor in educational leadership at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan, believe that educators cannot create conditions for learning that they have not experienced themselves. They call this "social symmetry" and use this idea as the basis for a four-meeting structure to scaffold the understanding and implementation of inquiry among groups of practitioners. Mullen, a professor of educational leadership at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, discusses why and how professional learning communities, where educators learn alongside each other and in community, create democratic spaces for inquiry that can effect realistic and important changes in education. Finally, Wall, a retired professor and Breuleux, an associate professor, both at McGill University, Heo, an educational consultant at the Centre francophone d'informatisation des organisations in Montreal, Rye and Lemay, teachers at St. John's Elementary School in the suburbs of Montreal, and Goyetche, the principal of Arundel Elementary School, have created the Building Community through Telecollaboration (BCT) Project. This has involved creating a lead team that has worked with groups of elementary school teachers over four years to encourage and facilitate the use of ICT-supported learning in their classrooms and to build a community of learners through face-to-face meetings and telecollaboration. They describe important lessons they have learned about ICT-supported learning and the potential of telecollaboration for sustaining professional inquiry in learning communities. Their work underscores the magnitude of the potential that exists in technology for inquiry and serves to remind us that grade six students such as Alexandra are often more comfortable and ahead of educators in using technology to benefit and expand their inquiries. The pros and cons of technology in inquiry merit more exploration.

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